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ABSTRACT

A 1-day orientation workshop for business clients from other cultures is described. Factors in program design that relate to the specific cultural group addressed are discussed, and include such considerations as culture-specific versus culture-general content, professional focus, and the learning style to which the participants are accustomed. The conceptual framework and specific objectives and workshop activities are then outlined. The workshop described incorporates discussion of: (1) the need for cross-cultural orientation; (2) an overview of concepts related to intercultural communication; (3) awareness of oneself as a cultural being; (4) the role of values and beliefs; (5) non-verbal codes; (6) the spoken language; (7) culture shock; and (8) evaluation. These components are intended to provide participants with the ability to see themselves and others in relative terms, identify some sources of cultural misunderstanding, and be aware of the emotional adjustments inherent in cross-cultural transitions. (MSE)

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Designing Cross-Cultural Orientation Programs for Business

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Designing Cross-Cultural Orientation Programs for Business

Before describing the design of a cross-cultural orientation program, it will be helpful to clarify some terms that are used to characterize various types of intercultural preparations. Janet Bennett, in her article, "Modes of Cross-Cultural Training", neatly differentiates among the terms "orientation", " training" and "education". [1] Briefly, an orientation program is designed to heighten the participants' awareness of cross-cultural variables, to change their attitude toward the impending experience. Training involves changing the way people will act in a new environment and requires a longer time than does simply alerting them to differences. Education, on the other hand, provides a deeper understanding of the principles underlying the cultural variations and, ideally, the ability to transfer that understanding to other, similar, situations.

Training programs may choose to focus on one or more educational approaches: "affective," "cognitive" or "behavioral." Those which produce an affective change involve the client's feelings or attitudes. Those with a cognitive emphasis appeal to the intellect, while those which focus on behavior modification try to induce new and more appropriate ways of acting in the anticipated culture. The most effective training programs combine all three of these emphases. In a one-day orientation program, however, it is unreasonable to expect to change behavior significantly, due to the limited time. The model presented here is primarily cognitive, but has some elements of affective learning.

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[1] Janet M. Bennett, "Modes of Cross-Cultural Training: Conceptualizing Cross-Cultural Training as Education," International Journal of Intercultural Relations, Vol. 10, No. 2 (1986), 118.

Finally, the distinction between culture-general and culture specific orientations is germane. A culture-general approach creates an awareness of the various elements of the communication process and how cultural differences can lead to misunderstanding. With a mixed group of business clients, who may be going to work in several different foreign countries or perhaps work with foreign counterparts here, the culture-general approach is the only reasonable one. A culture specific approach, on the other hand, draws most of its examples from a particular target culture and is appropriate when the clients are all destined to work with a particular national or ethnic group.

Establishing Goals:

In designing an intercultural orientation program, the first step is to identify the overall goal. A one-day orientation program cannot accomplish much training, that is, produce meaningful change in the participants' behavior. So the primary purpose will be limited to introducing them to relevant ideas and appropriate attitudes toward the cross-cultural experience. More specific goals should be developed in keeping with the expected audience, in this case, for example, business people who will be working in a variety of foreign countries. The workshop makes no claim to instruct clients in specific cross-cultural business practices, as that would be unrealistic in a one-day session. So our approach will be culture-general and focussed, where appropriate, on the business setting. It will include a mix of cognitive and experiential activities.

In designing programs for specific groups, one , of course, has to consider that organization's or group's needs and tailor the program accordingly. Even for a group all going to one country, however, it is more

effective to include culture-general as well as culture specific concepts in the program design.[2] This provides participants with a conceptual framework in which to fit their experiences and so make sense of what may otherwise be a bewildering flurry of experiences and feelings.

If the program is to be presented to non-American clients, a third consideration, in addition to the culture-general/culture specific and professional focus, will be the learning style to which the particpants are accustomed. Experiential activities are often uncomfortable enough for American clients, but, for some foreign nationals, role plays and simulations may be completely alien to their accepted ways of learning. Including them could thus disrupt the program.

Conceptual Framework:

The orientation program described here includes the following components: (1) the need for cross-cultural orientation, 2) overview of concepts related to intercultural communication, (3) awareness of oneself as a cultural being, (4) the role of values and beliefs, (5) non-verbal codes, (6) the spoken language, (7) culture shock, and (8) evaluation. These basic concepts should provide potential sojourners with the means to see themselves and others in relative terms, identify some sources of intercultural misunderstanding, and alert them to the emotional adjustments inherent in cross-cultural transitions. These are not the only concepts and exercises that may be useful in cross-cultural preparation. All of these, however, are fundamental to intercultural understanding.

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[2] William B. Gudykunst and Mitchell R. Hammer, "Basic Training Design: Approaches to Intercultural Training," in Handbook of Intercultural Training, Vol. 1, eds. Dan Landis and Richard W. Brislin (New York: Pergamon Press, 1983), p. 147

These concepts and the activities that apply them are illustrated in the model workshop that appears at the end of this article. The duration of each activity is generally twenty to thirty minutes, since this is the period of optimal attention span. Where the participants are actively involved with each other, activities can extend to an hour or longer. As much as possible, the concepts outlined above are implemented by a mix of cognitive and experiential tasks, of theory and practice, of quiet and active learning. The media used are as varied as possible, films, handouts, overhead transparencies, videotapes and audiotapes, to help offset monotony.

The explanation of the design components is presented in the following format. For each step there is a (1) statement of the concept, (2) statement of the objective(s), (3) brief explanation of the objective, (4) illustration of ways of implementing the objective, taken from the model workshop.

Introduction:

Introduce the workshop with an overview of the orientation session, its expected outcomes and duration, explaining briefly its culture-general focus and the variety of learning activities the group will participate in. Participants are usually quite receptive when they understand what to expect. This need take only five to ten minutes.

Concept 1: *Need for training*

Objective: To make clients aware of the importance of cross-cultural orientation and the costs of intercultural insensitivity

The organizer should present the rationale for intercultural orientation prior to the workshop itself. This may be conveyed through the literature that is sent out announcing the program. Describing the benefits of intercultural orientation is part of the public relations or recruiting process. However, it is also important to impress the clients attending the orientation session with the importance of cross-cultural preparation. They may be attending out of curiosity, a general interest or perhaps because their supervisor sent them.

Model Workshop activity: For business clients, present information about the failure rate and costs to the organization of abortive international relocations. For example, Copeland and Griggs in their book, Going International: How to Make Friends and Deal Effectively in the Global Marketplace , cite estimates of 20% to 70% premature returns of overseas staff and families, with costs running as high as $200,000 per failed relocation.[3] The rate of sub-par performance on the job, even when the employee does not return home early, is undoubtedly much higher.

On the other hand, avoid promising glowing results from a one-day orientation session, as all it is really capable of accomplishing is acquainting them with the issues involved. One outcome of the orientation session should be an understanding of the complexity of intercultural interactions and perhaps the need for further training. More in-depth preparation may require several days at least and, ideally, in-country follow-up.

Concept 2: *Overview of intercultural communication concepts*

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[3] Lennie Copeland and Lewis Griggs, Going International: How to Make Friends and Deal Effectively in the Global Marketplace (New York: Random House, 1985), p. xix.

Objective: To enable participants to identify important concepts relating to the impact of culture on the communication process

The participants are introduced to the basic concepts of intercultural communication. From the discipline of communication, these include the relevant components of interpersonal communication, such as the use of time and space, body language, language choice and rhetorical patterns. From anthropology include the pertinent aspects of culture, including customs, values and beliefs, especially as they relate to issues of authority and protocol. This may be accomplished via a mini-lecture.

Workshop activity: In the sample workshop , many of these fundamental ideas are included in the film, "Bridging the Culture Gap", which conveniently combines elements of the first step, illustrating the need for cross-cultural sensitivity, and important concepts of culture and communication in a business context. It is important to follow a film or videotape with a brief guided discussion, to answer questions and to assure that the audience has grasped the major ideas.

Concept 3: *Awareness of self as a cultural being*

Objective 1: To enable participants to identify some of their own cultural values

It is essential to make the participants aware that they themselves are the product of a culture. Often people believe that culture is what "other people" have. Their own is invisible to them, because they are inside it and it colors everything they see, like a pair of sun glasses they have forgotten they have on. This attitude is known as "ethnocentrism", the belief that

one's own way of thinking and behaving is the only natural one. Recognizing one's own attitudes is part of developing self-awareness, a crucial step in understanding and appreciating other peoples' attitudes. It is difficult to accept other ways of doing things if one is convinced that they are only aberrations of the "right" way to achieve them. The ultimate objective of this component of orientation is "ethnorelativism", the belief that each culture or people has its distinctive and valuable means of achieving certain results. This implies that one is not necessarily better or worse than the other, merely different. It does not require the American to accept and adopt those patterns of culture, but rather to understand their validity in the context of the culture in which they occur.

The struggle in passing from ethnocentrism to cultural relativity is one that all international sojourners have to cope with. One's cultural and personal identity may be threatened by immersion in "alien" ways of perceiving and acting. The realization that one is himself or herself a cultural being makes it easier to appreciate alternative ways of being. They are no longer automatically perceived as inferior to one's own approach and resistance to them may be reduced.

Workshop activity: In the model workshop, self-awareness begins with having the participants identify their own cultural values. Robert Kohls' book, Developing Intercultural Awareness (DIA) furnishes several excellent activities for this.[4] "Discovering American Values Through American Values" asks the group to list as many American proverbs as possible. Then the sayings are examined to discover what values they

[4] (Washington, D.C.: The Society for Intercultural Education, Training and Research, 1981), p. 13.

express, for example, beliefs in the importance of thriftiness, timeliness and cleanliness. Since values are high level abstractions that are often difficult to verbalize, this technique provides ready access to many basic American values. Participants also find it entertaining.

Values clarification exercises of various sorts may be used to induce a degree of self-awareness. Some of them might be related to professionally related issues, such as power relationships in organizations.

Objective 2: To enable participants to understand how others might see them

Once the group has an idea of some characteristic American values, it is useful to let them see how other cultures may view these values. This is the beginning of developing an alternative perspective on themselves as cultural beings. Because these views of Americans are often unflattering, they usually elicit an emotional response in the participants. The initial tendency is to deny these interpretations, but since they have already seen some of their own values in the preceding exercise, the clients frequently have to admit there is a grain of truth in them, even if it has been distorted.

Workshop activity: For this activity an exercise, "Observations of Foreign Visitors about American Behavior," from Kohls' same book is useful (DIA, pp. 7-11). The facilitator reads aloud or distributes copies of the observations to the participants who then discuss their validity.

Objective 3: To enable participants to understand the unreliability of stereotypes

Values are often expressed through characteristic attitudes or behaviors that people from other cultures frequently do not understand.

There is a tendency to generalize about all members of a culture on the basis of superficial observations. These are known as stereotypes. Since they are simplistic, they do not allow for variations or insight into the reasons for certain attitudes or behaviors. Hence they frequently lead to misunderstanding.

Workshop activity: First, ask the group to generate stereotypes of foreigners. Again this is usually entertaining and easy for them to do. Phrases such as "inscrutable Chinese," "excitable Italians," "romantic French" will provide food for thought. Point out that we frequently characterize other peoples on the basis of little real information or understanding of their values and behavior. Then read to them and have them discuss some of Kohls' "Most Common Stereotypes of Foreign Visitors About American Behavior" (DIA, p.12). The presenter should point out, if the group does not verbalize the idea itself, that the stereotypes of foreigners that they came up with are no more accurate or acceptable to the foreigners than were the stereotypes of Americans to them. Hence they should exercise caution in making or accepting stereotypes.

Concept 4: *Role of Values and Beliefs*

Objective: To enable participants to identify ways of classifying cultural values and beliefs and to categorize their own

A useful way of conceptualizing and comparing values and beliefs of widely varying cultures was developed by several anthropologists. The Kluckhohn Values Orientation Chart provides participants with a means of

visualizing the range of possible values and beliefs.[5] The five orientations and the three categories of belief are suitable to any culture.

Workshop activity: A good exercise can be found in Kohls' Survival Kit for Overseas Living, (pp. 22-27).[6] Put the Values Orientation Chart on an overhead transparency or distribute individual copies. Explain the definitions and illustrate the categories where necessary. Then ask the group members to put an "X" in the box on a blank values chart that corresponds to mainstream American values for each orientation. Finally, tally the number of people who marked each box.

Two results will be apparent: first, there will be a majority of marks in a particular box, and secondly, most orientations will have marks in more than one box. This reveals two characteristics of societal values; there is a majority value, but there are also minority values that reflect individual or subcultural differences. This observation can be used to reinforce the previous remarks about the inaccuracy of stereotypes.

Concept 5: *Non-verbal codes*

Objective 1: To enable participants to experience "abnormal" expression of certain non-verbal codes

Of the seven non-verbal codes discussed by Burgoon and Saine in The Unspoken Dialogue, the model workshop selects three for the participants to experience.[7] (The codes are: body movement or "kinesics", touch or

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[5] For a full discussion of values and beliefs, consult Chapters 3-5 in John Condon and Fathi Yousef's An Introduction to Intercultural Coimmunication (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1977).

[6] (Chicago: Intercultural Network/Systran Publications, 1979).

[7] Judee K. Burgoon and Thomas Saine, The Unspoken Dialogue: An Introduction to Nonverbal Communication (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1978).

"haptics", physical appearance, voice characteristics or "vocalics", interpersonal space or "proxemics", artifacts, and time or "chronemics".) These three are inherent in any interpersonal encounter: eye contact , interpersonal space and speech qualities other than words. These are all powerful communicative means that are usually out of our conscious awareness and likely to trigger automatic and frequently erroneous judgements of intent or attitude. The first two are treated here and the third along with the unit on spoken language.

Workshop activity: The activity involves role playing in groups of three (or four if necessary) for the interpersonal space and eye contact variations. In both exercises, each member of the group is given a card with instructions on how to act. For the proxemics activity one person is instructed to stand about one foot (closer than normal) from the people they talk to, the second person is told to stand two to three feet (farther than normal) from the others, and the third is instructed to simply engage in a normal social conversation. A fourth, if there is one, can be an observer. For the eye contact activity, the instructions tell one participant to maintain constant eye contact, another to avoid it, and the third to talk as he or she normally would.

After about five minutes of conversation, ask the participants to describe (1) what they observed about their conversational partners' behavior, (2) how they felt, and (3) what interpretation they placed on the others' actions. Repeat the activity for the second code. After discussion the facilitator should point out that there are cultures where these apparently "abnormal" behaviors are the norm, and where our norms would seem strange and open to misinterpretation.

The advantage of even such brief role plays is their combination of cognitive and affective learning.

Objective 2: To enable participants to identify the codes of non-verbal communication

The non-verbal aspects of intercultural communication constitute the next conceptual component of the orientation program. In the model workshop the participants experience the codes first and then conceptualize them, for the sake of variety. The ideas may be introduced first, however, followed by the role plays. Non-verbal signs may carry over half of the total information that we receive from a speaker. If we misinterpret these signs, even when we understand the verbal message, we may misconstrue the other person's intentions or feelings. The chances of misreading these signs increases greatly when dealing with foreigners whose non-verbal codes may vary as widely as their verbal codes.

Workshop activity: The presenter explains briefly the seven non-verbal codes and then shows the film, "Communication: The Nonverbal Agenda", which examines kinesics in the context of a corporation, although a monocultural American one. This allows participants to see illustrations of some of the non-verbal behaviors they role played and then learned about in the lecturette. Discuss the major points in the film to make sure they have been understood. Some examples of cross-cultural non-verbal differences might be recalled here from the morning's film, "Bridging the Culture Gap".

Concept 6: *The spoken language*

Objective 1: To enable participants to understand the importance of a foreign language

The last important component of intercultural communication presented here is the spoken language. It should be axiomatic that a visitor planning to work in another country for an extended period of time learn the language of that country. Yet repeatedly one hears that "everyone there speaks English," that "I couldn't possibly take the time to learn the language well enough to conduct business in it," or that interpreters are always available. The American sojourner will feel more secure and adapt better if he or she studies the language, even if only for social use and running errands. He or she will have some idea of what is being said around them. Perhaps most important, it communicates to one's foreign counterparts that one cares enough about their culture to study its language.

Workshop activity: Lead a discussion of their experiences with foreigners, in business or elsewhere, and their perceptions of and reactions to them when their command of English is limited. How readily do Americans attempt to communicate with people who cannot express themselves in English? How frustrating is it, both to the foreigner and the American, when they cannot comprehend simple directions and basic phrases? How much appreciation of American society do they have when they speak no English? Compare this attitude to the one they would hold toward a foreigner who may speak our language with an accent and some mistakes, but who manage to make themselves understood?

When to use the foreign language will depend, of course, upon the degree of fluency and the circumstances in which one finds oneself. In all

cases, however, proper use of the language should be considered an expression of respect for the culture.

Objective 2: To enable participants to understand how non-verbal aspects of language can lead to misinterpretation

Related to the words spoken in a language are various features such as pitch, stress, intonation pattern, rate and volume. These are considered an aspect of non-verbal communication, "vocalics" or "paralanguage". There are three distinct cases where such features need to be brought to conscious awareness. The first is native speakers of English from other countries, such as India, Nigeria and Australia. The second is speakers of English as a second language, and the third, speakers of foreign languages. It would seem that the first case poses no problem, but in fact we attribute attitudes and meanings to speakers whose words are perfectly comprehensible, but whose intonation or stress patterns are different from those we are accustomed to. The same applies to some extent to speakers of other languages using English. Their different accents can cause credibility and other problems for the speaker of American English. Even when foreigners are using their own language, American listeners who understand none of the words may attribute attitudes and emotions to them based on intonation, stress, rate of speaking and volume characteristics. An Italian, for example, who may seem to speak faster and more loudly than a typical American may be perceived as excitable or angry. The purpose of this exercise is to make people aware of how readily and easily we make attributions of personal characteristics based vocal characteristics other than words.

Workshop activity: In the model workshop, the videotape "Crosstalk" illustrates and analyzes the case of Indian immigrants coping with British institutions and how their paralinguistic qualities can cause problems. This is followed by a brief discussion of the salient points.

Another means of conveying the same idea is to prerecord speakers of other languages reading a passage aloud in English, or discussing the same topic in English with an American interviewer. Play the tape for the group and ask the participants to rate the credibility of the various speakers. Certain accents will show greater credibility than others, regardless of the individual who is speaking.

A similar exercise can be carried out with foreigners speaking their native tongues. Record a series of brief conversations about a topic in several languages. Play the tape and ask the listeners to make judgements about which speakers are more excited, calm, irritated, serious, and so forth.

Concept 7: *"Culture shock"*

Objective 1: To enable participants to identify the stages of culture shock

Culture shock is the disorientation that results from new and ambiguous stimuli in the cultural environment (such as the language, non-verbal behavior, customs, values and beliefs). A sojourner may pass through several stages of culture shock: euphoria, confusion and anger, rejection of host nationals, gradual acceptance, pre-return excitement, and possibly re-entry shock. These may be characterized by a series of physical symptoms

as well. Culture shock is considered to be another form of psychological stress, similar to a major job change or other emotional adjustment.[8]

Workshop activity: Present culture shock in a mini-lecture, "Culture Shock: A Process of Transition", illustrating the stages with examples of common symptoms.

Objective 2: To enable participants to identify skills for coping with culture shock and for preparing for their sojourn

A variety of ways of coping with the stress of cultural adjustment exist. These include increased rest and relaxation, bringing personal treasures from home, consulting with others having experienced similar situations, planning successful mini excursions, and studying the language and customs. Simply being able to recognize one's emotional reactions as part of a common adaptation process provides some help in coping with them.

Workshop activity: After outlining some of the coping skills for culture shock, suggest ways that the participants may prepare for their stay. These may include reading up on the history and culture of the country (such as the sources listed in Kohls' Developing Intercultural Awareness [pp. 66-69[as well as his Survival Kit For Overseas Living. [pp. 87-88]), studying the language, planning what items of personal value to take along, and talking with people who have worked there or who are from that country.

In order to end on a note of pleasant anticipation, ask the participants to brainstorm the beneficial and exciting aspects of a sojourn abroad. These

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[8] A good discussion of culture shock and its "treatment" can be found in Gary R. Weaver's article, "Understanding and Coping With Cross-Cultural Adjustment Stress" in Cross-Cultural Orientation: New Conceptualizations and Applications, ed. Michael Page (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1986), pp. 111-145.

may include an increase in pay or benefits, more job responsibility, greater chances for promotion, visits to historical and natural sites, new cuisine, educational advantages of studying another language and culture, meeting new friends, and so forth. This will conclude the session with energy and a positive outlook.

Conclusion:

Although it is not part of the conceptual framework of the model orientation session, a guided conclusion is as important structurally as the introduction. Since it has been over seven hours since the orientation session began, some of the initial ideas and examples may have been forgotten. Succinctly review the materials, exercises and concepts covered. This is helpful in preparing for the last component of the session, evaluation.

Conclude by relating to the participants that those who have the most realistic expectations about their experiences abroad adapt best to the foreign culture. The purpose of the workshop has been to create appropriate expectations. However, as The Experiment in International Living is fond of urging its trainees: "Expect the unexpected." That is what makes going abroad an adventure.

Concept 8: *Evaluation*

Objective: To provide the presenters with a measure of the effectiveness of each component of the orientation program

It is helpful to have an evaluation of both the perceived usefulness of the entire orientation program as well as of the individual components. In that way the presenters can modify whatever activities seemed less successful and retain those that were effective.

Workshop activity: Have participants complete an evaluation form such as the one given by Robert Kohls in Developing Intercultural Awareness, (pp. 73-76).

The ideas and exercises in this workshop have proven useful in alerting potential sojourners to the need for intercultural sensitivity and to some of the variables involved. Among the other possibilities that might have been included, with more time or a different focus, are case studies, simulations and skill development activities.

The most important considerations in designing cross-cultural orientation programs are clearly articulated goals and objectives that are relevant to the clients' needs and that address the major issues in culture and communication.

Cross-Cultural Orientation for Business

A One-day Workshop

Concept	Activities	Duration
Introduction	Purpose of workshop; goals, methods	10 min.
Need for Orientation	Mini-lecture: Business Blunders Abroad	20 min.
Overview: communication & culture	Film: "Bridging the Culture Gap"	30 min.
	Discussion	15 min.
Self-awareness through values	Discovering American Values	20 min.
	BREAK	15 min.
	How Others See Us	10 min.
	Stereotypes: (1) of foreigners (2) of Americans	30 min.
Conceptualizing values	Kluckhohn Values Orientation Chart	30 min.
	LUNCH	60 min.

Recapitulation	Brief review of morning session ideas	10 min.
Nonverbal communication	Small group interactions: (1) proxemics (2) eye contact	20 min.
	Mini-lecture: Nonverbal codes	15 min.
	Film: "Communication: The Nonverbal Agenda"	25 min.
	Discussion	15 min.
Spoken language	Discussion: The importance of language	15 min.
	BREAK	15 min.
	Mini-lecture: Vocalics	15 min.
	Videotape: "Crosstalk"	20 min.
	Discussion	15 min.
Cultural adjustment	"Culture Shock: A Process of Transition"	20 min.
	Coping skills and predeparture preparation	30 min.
Conclusion	Discussion: What Have You Learned?	10 min.
Evaluation	Participants complete evaluation forms	15 min.

Brief Annotated Bibliography and Materials List

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Kohls, Robert. Survival Kit for Overseas Living. Chicago: Intercultural Network/Systran Publications, 1979. *Handy brief self-study guide for participants, both pre- and post-departure.*

Weaver, Gary R. "Understanding and Coping With Cross-Cultural Adjustment Stress" in Cross-Cultural Orientation: New Conceptualizations and Applications, ed. Michael Page. Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1986. *A useful description of the causes and remedies of culture shock, with implications for trainers.*

Audio-visual

"Communication: The Non-verbal Agenda", a film presenting differing non-verbal messages in a corporate setting. *Available for rental from: Michigan Media, 400 Fourth St., Ann Arbor, Michigan 48103-4816.*

"Cross-talk", a videotape analyzing misunderstandings caused by paralinguistic and rhetorical features of English as spoken by Indians in Britain. *Available from: Films, Inc., 144 Wilmette Ave., Wilmette, Illinois 60091.*

"Going International", a series of 4 films: "Bridging the Culture Gap", "Managing the Overseas Assignment", "Beyond Culture", "Welcome Home, Stranger". *Available from: Copeland Griggs Productions, 411 Fifteenth Avenue, San Francisco, California 94118.*

Biography: John D. Ogden

I have spent considerable time overseas, starting with a year stay in Italy when I was 11 years old. The taste of foreign cultures got into my blood, so that when I graduated from Brown University in 1965 with a B.A. in French, my fiancée and I got married and left a day and a half later for Peace Corps training. We spent two years in Liberia as teachers from 1965 to 1967. Upon returning to the U.S., I got an M.A. and a Ph.D. in French at SUNY at Buffalo with a dissertation of French-language poets from Africa and the Caribbean. In 1970-'71 I lived in Paris while doing research on my thesis and then came to the University of Michigan-Flint where I have been ever since. During 1981-'82 I held a Fulbright Lectureship at Omar Bongo University in Libreville, Gabon. For the past few years I have been working on an M.A. in Communication, with an emphasis on intercultural, at MSU. Currently I am Associate Professor of French and Chairman of the Foreign Language Department at UM-Flint. Next year, on my sabbatical, I plan to go to France to work with intercultural specialists.